Topic Paper Assignment & Rubric

Topics discussed in this course grew out of essential questions that we ask ourselves as professionals whose task is partly to encourage the use of and provide access to electronic resources for children and young adults. Since there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, you ponder the readings, weigh class discussions, explore resources, and deliberate your personal viewpoints about each topic.

Your final assignment is to explore a topic of interest to which you will add your own value. To do this, you will create and write about your own essential question. Choose a topic that relates to the course. It could be a topic that we did not address to your satisfaction during our short time together or one that you wish to explore in more detail. It may be one that we did not cover in class but has to do with the theme of the course. Whatever topic you choose must be crafted into an essential question and approved by your instructor before you begin your research and writing.

1. Craft an essential question that addresses an area of particular interest to you.
2. Have your essential question approved by your instructor via email by August 2.
3. Begin researching and writing about your topic. Your final paper should be a thoughtful response to your essential question in fewer than 2000 words.
4. Follow MLA format for parenthetical citations and works cited. Use a basic 10- or 12-point font, double space, and include a title page.
5. The paper is due no later than August 12. You may turn in a hard copy to the School of Information office or email it as an attachment to hamerly@ischool.utexas.edu.
6. Use the following scoring rubric to guide your efforts:

   Content (15 points):
   ✓ Engaging topic
   ✓ Uses information from scholarly sources
   ✓ Goes beyond information in sources
   ✓ Adds to body of knowledge, as opposed to merely borrowing from it
   ✓ Thoughtful, thorough response to essential question

   Format (10 points):
   ✓ Includes title page
   ✓ Follows MLA format for parenthetical documentation
   ✓ Follows MLA format for works cited
   ✓ Follows requested formatting for font/spacing
   ✓ Does not exceed 2000 words

Please do not expect to turn in a paper after the August 12 deadline. If circumstances arise that might prevent you from turning in your paper on time, please notify me immediately at hamerly@ischool.utexas.edu.